

The Memorandum of Understanding for Transition Services was renewed January 1, 2007 and is in effect through June 30, 2011. Parties to the agreement are the Department of Public Instruction, Office of Special Education, Job Service North Dakota, the Department of Career and Technical Education and the Department of Human Services Children Special Health Services Unit, Developmental Disabilities Division and Vocational Rehabilitation. The MOU addresses many areas including: consultation and technical assistance, transition planning, roles and responsibilities including financial responsibilities of the agencies and outreach. Some of those activities are described below.

VR policy provides that Individualized Employment Plans are developed as soon as possible, but at least before the student leaves school. Since the actual service delivery takes place in the eight regions of the state each region has developed a regional transition Community of Practice committee. Each regional committee is to develop transition plans which are in various phases of implementation. The committees use a specific document for their planning process entitled: "*Essential Tools, Interagency Transition Team Development and Facilitation*" published by the National Center on Secondary Education and Training, OSEP. The use of this document is helping to better coordinate efforts.

The plans include the following elements: how transition activities will be implemented, the source and amount of funding needed, who is involved and their roles and responsibilities, and evaluation criteria. The Department of Public Instruction also contracts for services to track students with disabilities exiting secondary education, how many go to employment, how many enter post-secondary training, how many have other post-secondary plans and how many do not.

The statewide North Dakota Transition Community of Practice Council has representation from each region and continues to be very active, holding quarterly meetings. Four subcommittees were established in 2009 to address specific areas of need: **Information Sharing, Assessment, Youth Leadership and Healthy Transitions.**

Vocational Rehabilitation continues to commit approximately \$40,000 per year per region to fund transition activities. The local education units, and other partners, may provide additional funds and resources. In 2008 and 2009 Vocational Rehabilitation also funded special transition projects for summer employment including a transition camp for students with disabilities.

In addition, transitioning students who are identified through the education unit's Section 504 coordinator are referred to Vocational Rehabilitation, and contacts are made with the guidance counselors to assure those with special needs are aware of services through Vocational Rehabilitation. Referrals are also received from independent living staff working with transition age students.

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation has a very good working relationship with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). We have attended National conferences bringing back information to be presented as a team at the state level. We have also partnered in putting together state transition conferences. The VR field services director with DPI's special services director have attended all of the 8 regional Community of Practices planning committees in the state. We are looking at the feasibility of conducting regional training during the upcoming biennium for VR & DPI staff, parents, partnering agencies & community advocates.

In 2008, Vocational Rehabilitation added an additional program administrator at the state office to coordinate transition services, supported employment, assistive technology and community rehabilitation programs and services.

Vocational Rehabilitation is also looking at using ARRA Stimulus funds to enhance employment outcomes for students transitioning from high school.